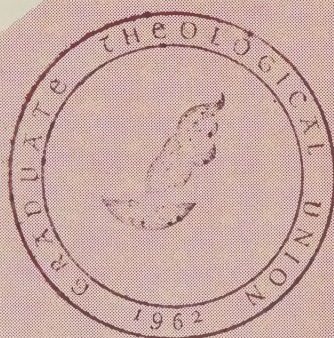


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The Church Must Change

Bishops' Synod and Dissent

Protestant Eucharistic Reality?

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On the Move

Archbishop Hallinan, once again, says the much needed encouraging word for those who really believe in renewal. In an interview held after the recent bishop's meeting in Washington, while specifically discussing the liturgy, he explained principles that really apply to all areas of Catholic reform.

Experimentation. "There is no question," he said, "that the liturgical direction is up. There was evidence among the bishops and the increased desires of priests and laymen for authorized experimentation according to paragraphs 37-40 of the Constitution on the Liturgy."

Experimental Centers. Admitting the dangers both in amateurish tampering with forms of worship and in uninformed opposition to perfectly legitimate desires for experiment, he welcomed the bishops' decision to approve liturgical experimental centers in competent universities or seminaries. "This move," he explained, "was, of course, part of the mandate of Vatican II. Some kind of institute for pastoral liturgy should aid the commission. It should include persons eminent in liturgy, along with laymen." He envisioned three or four centers, if Rome approves, with the resources and personnel to devise worship for small groups which would work as leaven among those of the faithful who participate only in the Sunday parish Mass. Large congregations need someone to point the way to more authentic Christian community in worship.

Excesses. "This is not to be confused in any way with wild and individualistic campus liturgies, done without planning or authority," he explained. "They are rather an obvious fad, satisfying to whims and personal choices, but lacking in the reverence due God and awareness of the needs of ordinary men. Art, poetry and music can be creative and spontaneous, but also disciplined. Liturgy can be creative and spontaneous without being ludicrous."

It is enormously encouraging when one or another of that relatively small but growing number of Church leaders, who, while deploring obvious excesses, advance both the legitimate desires of the faithful and the clear directives of the Council.

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

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The Church Must Change

JOHN T. MCGINN, C.S.P.

I entered the Paulist Seminary, nearly half a century ago, after a simple chain of reflections. I had had first-hand experience of the hardships, vices and many virtues of the poor on Manhattan's Eastside. I had also seen the ennobling influence of the Roman Catholic Church on my family and neighbors, and was convinced that it could answer the deepest needs and aspirations of men everywhere. As a priest, consequently, I might be able to help people in the matters that mean most in life.

Years later, when Pope John pushed through his plan to convoke a reforming ecumenical council—in the teeth of adroit and sustained opposition—I took a new lease on life. My early confidence in the relevance of the Church to men's hopes, severely battered many times, but never even for a minute shattered, became immeasurably stronger and assured. No miracle drug ever had the exhilarating effect that Pope John and his Council had on me.

RELIGIOUS TURMOIL

When I write or speak in this vein, disgruntled people sometimes object, "how can you possibly believe this with all the turmoil now agitating the Church? Prominent clerics deserting the priestly ministry and even the Church itself. Nuns angrily asserting their rights. Students and professors of venerable colleges out on strike. Bishops cracking down on their people. Periodic baleful laments from Rome. Don't you realize how perplexed and deeply shaken are the very people you became a priest to serve?"

No one can deny that the Catholic

community faces a massive crisis. Some of its sensational manifestations are undeniably ugly and even shocking. But the Council did not cause these sores. The dramatic events that give the newsmen a frontpage story almost every day are the consequences of ills that have festered in the Church for centuries. They prove conclusively how imperative it was to call a Council.

OLD WEAKNESSES

These are symptoms which simply disclose (in an age of free, rapid, universal mass-communication) weaknesses that blunted and sometimes frustrated the ministry of priests like myself. Because of the prevailing policy of silence, any mention of these deficiencies would have been interpreted as traitorous disloyalty, however sincerely or deeply we felt about them. In our laudable effort to defend and preserve the Church we grew accustomed to a frontdoor idealism and a backdoor realism. Yet we should have realized that any hint of concealment or suppression of self-criticism would inevitably lead non-Catholics to conclude that we were shoring up a ruin rather than building a city of the living God.

Vatican Council II was probably the most significant religious event of our century. Practiced observers have declared that no other deliberative body in our world ever undertook so far-reaching and candid an assessment of its defects, resources and goals. After years of soul searching and debate, the Council's directives were finally promulgated for implementation. The ancient Church had, at long last, inaugurated a gigantic program for renewal,

change and reform. And anyone who has undertaken his own reformation knows what an agonizing experience this has to be. Obviously, the renewal of a community so vast as the Catholic Church, whose thorough-going reform was so long postponed, could not possibly be painless.

This reformation simply had to be more than a superficial facelifting. It is slowly changing both the external appearance and internal spirit of the entire Church. It reaches down to the deepest roots of Catholic life. And the process has only begun. All announcements to loosen seat belts are obviously premature. Things may seem to be increasingly chaotic now, but there is every likelihood of greater confusion to come. There is no turning back. The renewal inspired by the Holy Spirit at Vatican II can be ignored, blocked, delayed, diverted or temporarily dismissed. It trudges along a dusty, rocky, uphill road. No one is going to bring it to a full stop.

DIVERSE RESPONSE

Every Catholic cherishes Christ's promise to send his Spirit to teach, guide and strengthen the Church until the end of time. But by personal experience we also realize that the effectiveness of the Spirit is partially dependent on human cooperation. Man's response to God's gifts is irregular and unpredictable. So it is not surprising that the Spirit's call to Catholic renewal manifests itself not merely in serene, grateful cooperation—but also in jumpy impatience for more and quicker changes, or in granite hostility to any but the most innocuous adaptations. In the situation, we might all cultivate Pope John's sense of humor. When people were scandalized at the heated debates among the bishops at the Council, the Pope remarked wryly: "after all, we are not monks chanting in choir!"

The full explanation of this complex phenomenon awaits adequate study. But it is possible to identify some of its conspicuous elements and trace their interconnection. For one thing, American Catholics are exhibiting the results of the confluence of two powerful currents, one that

surges throughout the universal Church, and another that has gathered force here at home for decades.

Social scientists tell us that societies undergo a development similar to that of an individual. They are born, grow and, if normally healthy, reach maturity. This progress from infancy to adolescence, and particularly towards adulthood, is characterized by awkwardness, uncertainty and much suffering. Somewhat like the individual, a society must experience a series of crises as it deepens and sharpens its self-identity.

CATHOLIC SELF-IDENTITY

Theologians apply this principle, and it does have large application, to that unique society: the Roman Catholic Church. The Church is, after all, a mystical corporate person. It grows gradually in innumerable ways. And it experiences periods of acute distress during which it enriches a sense of its self-awareness.

Applying all this to the present plight of the Catholic community, Mr. John Cogley recently remarked:

"We are all going through a kind of identity crisis in the wake of the Vatican Council. Like a youth who has put away the things of childhood but is still not ready for the big plunge into adulthood, we do not seem quite sure who or what we are.

"Church authorities suddenly having to deal with 'children' insisting on their freedom have a difficult time realizing that the parental role has changed. Some of them appear to be hopelessly baffled by the situation, like the parents of teenagers demanding new privileges.

"Some of the clergy, religious, and many of the laity, for their part, have found the wine of liberty heady stuff and appear to be as uncertain as adolescents about how to use it."

This new stage of development and the "growing pains" which accompany it, is being experienced by Catholics the world over. But it takes on special coloring from country to country. In the United States, it is intensified by a noteworthy growth in Catholic status on the national scene. Between the end of World War II and the

opening of the Council, American Catholics experienced an acceleration of the process by which they outgrew their roots in the urban ghetto and developed into a church of middle-class suburbanites. They increasingly adjusted to the realities of a pluralistic society and enjoyed the resources enabling them to enter fully into the mainstream of American life.

The Catholic immigrant, his children and grandchildren, struggling for survival in a climate that was often hostile, rested content with the support of a church which inculcated dependence and required unquestioning loyalty to ecclesiastical authority. But the contemporary Catholic—better educated, more accustomed to responsibility, quite capable of standing on his own feet in his civic, social, business and professional life—began to chafe under a continuing ecclesiastical paternalism.

SOURCES OF TENSION

Some church authorities met the new situation with consternation and hurt feelings, and became more authoritarian. Nor was the laity's new found independence always exercised with good judgment. However, the point is that, during the years when the entire Church was shifting from the Counter-Reformation outlook to the post-Vatican vision, American Catholics had come of age. And the intersection of these transitions goes a long way to explain the tensions and conflicts we now endure.

Complicating this situation was the fact that although the progressive point of view, in the main, prevailed at the Council, it obviously did not achieve a complete victory. It made only a slight dent in the armor of the more obdurate of the conservatives, who, incidentally, retained many of the administrative posts after the Council. And even where renewal won support from the bishops, this did not always mean that they had interiorized the new outlook or had actually made it the well-spring of their thought and action.

The renewed theology, acquaintance with world conditions, appreciation of things that can and should be changed, a sense of urgency in organizing the Council's

program of reform—all this met with uneven understanding and reception even among church leaders. At times it seems that the mildest and most obvious consequences of their own decisions took them completely by surprise.

To wag even a mildly critical finger in the direction of Church leaders, one should always keep in mind the claims of simple justice, Christian charity, and human understanding. Criticism should always be accompanied by a recognition of the reality of authority in the Church, however much our grasp of this as a service to God's people has been deepened and modified by the Council. And it should appreciate the inseparable relationship of the episcopacy to the unity of the People of God. Carping, gratuitous criticism here can be disruptive and harmful beyond imagining.

BRAVE DECREES TIMID PERFORMANCE

There isn't the slightest question that many in positions of authority are dedicated persons who, according to their lights, labor to serve the Church's best interests. Many of them have won and richly deserve our affection and gratitude for their long, faithful, devoted service. Yet it is also a fact that many in authority—and often their most trusted advisers—were trained in an earlier style, were frequently selected for administrative skills, and are now deterred from adequate study by a heavy daily workload. For these and other reasons, there is an undeniable gap between the audacious declarations of the Council and the timid performance of many who make and execute policy. It can be disillusioning, not to say dangerous, to give rise to expectations whose fulfillment is unduly delayed.

Turning to the rank and file of Catholics, in almost any grouping, it is obvious that there are two main reactions towards Catholic renewal. One group generally tends toward conservatism. They often evidence a simple, unreflecting faith; incline towards an individualistic piety; are apt to be legalistic; and are slow to accept or share responsibility according to the norms

of Vatican II. The Church for them is apt to be a static, external institution, which for its very preservation should remain wary of religious association with non-Catholic Christians, and pessimistic regarding the aspirations and accomplishments of the modern world. They do not attack the Council openly, but they are fearful that recent changes are a threat to their basic religious security. Their response to the Council's ideals is often pitiable dismay, grudging acquiescence or even muttering resistance.

The other group were generally inclined to welcome enthusiastically the positive accomplishments of Vatican II. Reading, reflection and experience had convinced them of the necessity for far-reaching change and, if anything, they regretted the necessary compromises that curtailed the progressive tendency of the Council. Their profound commitment to Christ in his Church made them all the more eager to make him effectively present to the world of the twentieth century. Instead of resisting change, they are now eager to leave behind both the restricted outlook, and what is inessential, in the legacy of previous historical periods.

CHURCH A COMMUNITY

Inexorably at work among the individuals in these two groups, inspiring diverse reactions to the abrasive issues which irritate them, is the movement of an entire religious society adjusting to the changes to which a richer self-awareness impels them. Mr. John Horgan recently described this process with penetration and accuracy when he remarked:

"The crisis we are going through can be seen not so much as a crisis of authority as what Fr. John Courtney Murray has called a 'crisis of community.' It is a crisis because the different members of the community are in the process of a fairly radical transformation and until that transformation has become a reality there will continue to be turbulence, anger, disappointment and fear. The re-discovery of the Church as a community is a fact, but it is not yet—certainly not for the majority of Catholics—an experience, a reality.

"It will be some time before this is achieved, before we arrive at a measure of agreed stability which will reflect the most important, most authentic and alive features of the transitional period without incorporating its inevitable excesses. And the only way in which we can ensure this is by insistence on the three essentials for the proper functioning of any community: dialogue, honesty and freedom."

As the Catholic community gropes towards a richer awareness of its identity and mission, emotional strains and diverse responses to the on-going maturing process are inevitable. Growing up completely to the full stature of Christ, individually and collectively, must await the Lord's second coming. At the moment, however, some of us clutch the apron-strings of a rather possessive, living-in-the-past ecclesiastical system, somewhat unwilling to grow or to encourage its members to mature. Others impatiently "jump the gun" and run too far and too fast in their fascination for the new. A whole theology of change has been developing for years. But until its richest insights are assimilated, confrontation between the sit-tight conservative and the nervous type of progressive generates tension and division.

TO LIVE IS TO CHANGE

Some Catholics have been so thoroughly indoctrinated in the idea of a static, immovable Church that they have less appreciation of its dynamic, living quality. And they instinctively run for cover when they are called upon to alter their religious thinking, customs and structures—even when these directives come with the authority of an ecumenical council. But isn't change a law of all life? Even the Catholic Church, insofar as it is a human social organism, is not altogether exempt from this law. Some things are of its very substance, necessary to its essential identity, and they cannot change. But others are obviously the product of time; they can and have been altered again and again throughout history.

It is helpful to recall that our bodies change imperceptibly every few years. Our

opinions change with added knowledge and experience. And our intimacy with God grows or diminishes continuously. Our relations with the people closest to us are altered by their shifting interests, marriage or death. And the conditions under which we live often change radically. A job becomes obsolete, our neighborhood runs down or improves, and world conditions make us modify our national goals or purposes. This sort of thing happens in every age and a large part of life in all its dimensions, even in religion, consists in accommodating to necessary change.

COMING TO TERMS WITH CHANGE

"Living, in fact," wrote Samuel Butler, "is nothing else than the process of accommodation: when we fail in it a little we are stupid, when we fail flagrantly we are mad; when we suspend it temporarily we sleep, when we give up the attempt altogether we die." All this is especially pertinent today. Our world society is so mobile that the sense of the unfamiliar and the insecurity it brings is perhaps the source of the most widespread psychological malady of our time. Coming to terms with change is not easy since it frequently shakes us rudely out of accustomed ways. Coming to maturity is never effortless; but it is always preferable to remaining a child.

Having said this, it needs to be asserted that discretion is also an essential element in growing up. Change for the sake of change, insufficient staff work, house-wrecking without an adequate blueprint for rebuilding—can be as catastrophic as inaction. G. K. Chesterton was thinking of the destructive type of reformer when he said: "They don't know what they're doing because they don't know what they're undoing." And speaking of reformers, I've known a considerable number of them in-

timately. The extremists among them defeated their own good cause by lack of even a rudimentary knowledge of human nature. And the recollection of their intolerance, arrogance, and insensibility still has the power to turn my stomach.

Years ago, a delegation of the Roman nobility, certainly never headstrong in relinquishing their privileges, paid their annual visit to Pope Pius XII. He felt it necessary to urge them to adjust to the realities of a new era. Yet he appreciated their natural attachment to their traditions. While some things are worth saving, he remarked, others should be scrapped—making way for the new. The wise man, he counseled, integrates the enduring values of the past with the sound elements in genuine progress; and to ignore either is to invite disaster.

THE CHURCH AND ITS RENEWAL

And in the Catholic community today, there is a growing body who cooperate wholeheartedly and constructively with the forces of renewal, avoiding the excesses both of the reactionaries and of the lunatic fringe. They are at ease with the two-fold perennial challenge to the Church: to remain itself and to renew itself. Within this body you can find bishops, priests, religious and laity, each making his own contribution. Of course, they cannot escape some puzzlement and distress at the trials God's Providence now sends us. But with serene faith and unshakable confidence in the never-failing aid of Christ's Spirit, they prayerfully and studiously endeavor to acquire the spirit of the Council, to master and apply its directives. They make few headlines, receive precious little encouragement, and are too seldom consulted. But their Christian good sense, competence, courage and enterprise are slowly revitalizing the Church.

The Synod of Bishops and Dissent

JOHN B. SHEERIN, C.S.P.

One of the main aims of the Synod of Bishops was to provide a forum for the expression of dissent. There was no need to convoke an assembly of bishops from all over the world in order to refresh the bishops' memories on basic Catholic doctrine or traditional Church policy. The Synod was designed rather to face up to the phenomenon of renewal and reform in the Church, and to confront it collegially. The doctrine of *collegiality* approved by the Second Vatican Council states that the bishops share with the pope in the government of the universal Church. In terms of the Synod, this meant that the bishops were to discuss the Council reforms. Was Church renewal proceeding fast enough? Were the Council reforms being implemented? What new reforms should be inaugurated in line with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council?

LIVELY DEBATE AMONG THE BISHOPS

Within the Synod itself there was vigorous debate. At the Council the bishops delivered monologues, but at the Synod sessions there was a spirited exchange of opinions pro and con. In short, there was dissent. From all reports, however, it appears that an attempt was made to bottle up dissent within Vatican walls. Secrecy was imposed on the bishops and they were

not permitted to give interviews to the Press. The official Vatican Press service released only vagrant excerpts of what was said without identifying who said it. This was surely a perverted form of collegiality, the core principle of which is "the exercise of authority in the framework of dialogue."

The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity points out that the Church is a living body, "that no part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in the functions as well as in the life of the body." The hundreds of millions of laity as well as the lower clergy, nuns and brothers throughout the world were not concerned about bishops reiterating traditional teachings and policies: the laity have their catechisms and theological manuals. But they did want to hear the voices of dissent among the bishops. What they got in the daily press and over TV and radio, was inaccurate and inadequate accounts of Synod debates. The official Vatican News service offered only a smattering of information. The (unofficial) Center for Coordination of Communications released unofficial bulletins and operated a Press Panel, but they were hamstrung by the iron curtain of official secrecy. The result

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was that journalists had to rely on "leaks," believed to be benevolent bishops, TV technicians or ushers at the Synod. Thus, statements made at the Synod were attributed to the wrong persons and several Cardinals had to protest glaring instances of being misquoted. Cardinal Heenan expressed the problem very simply: "For those who wish to modernize the Church, undue secrecy is one of the practices (due) for reform."

Secret diplomacy behind closed doors is neanderthal. Dissent is a fact of modern life, ecclesiastical as well as political, and if handled properly dissent can aid in development of doctrine and act as a salutary corrective of ecclesiastical abuses. Pope John warned the bishops at the Council not to degenerate into an assembly of yea-sayers, like a choir of monks "singing the one same note." The Church owes much to dissenters like St. Catherine of Siena, St. Bernard and St. Thomas More who engaged in diatribes against the mores of churchmen in their time. This is not to say however that all dissenters are forever right. Many are cantankerous, peevish, and neurotic; and at times in the Church there has been what De Lubac calls "a collective neurasthenic crisis" when crotchety critics have run amuck.

A PLACE FOR OTHER OPINIONS

It means that we have to cultivate "the gift of discernment of spirits" so that we can distinguish creative criticism from crankiness, but it also means that we must listen carefully to what the critics of the status quo have to say. Would that the official Church had listened carefully to what Luther was trying to say 450 years ago! The duty to listen to dissenters has been emphasized by the Second Vatican Council's deep concern about respect for conscience. For, according to the Council, a man must follow his conscience in order to come to God and "the social nature of man itself requires that he should give external expression to his internal acts of religion" (*Declaration on Religious Freedom*: Ch. I, no. 3).

Due and respectful deference to dissenters will undoubtedly become a colossal

problem for Catholics in the future as we come to realize that true religion expresses itself not only in liturgy but also in action in the world. And it will be a thorny problem especially for the Catholic faithful in their confrontation with unconventional social conduct and social reformers. Traditionally, the Church and Catholics have been defenders of the established order, but they are now aware that they must respect the consciences of dissenters, especially when law and order are not on the side of social justice.

Archbishop Cousins of Milwaukee has already faced up to this problem of dissent. He has not only listened carefully to Father Groppi but has approved the cause for which he is fighting. Bishop James P. Shannon of Minneapolis-St. Paul has also come out in support of Father Groppi. Bishop Shannon said that he had no intention of defending the lawless acts of Father Groppi's followers such as the invasion and demolition of the Mayor's office in Milwaukee: "But I do defend vigorously the right and duty of James E. Groppi, as a man, as a citizen, and as a priest, to protest the deliberate continuation among his people of sub-standard housing, enforced by a hostile white majority."

DISSENTERS ARE OFTEN CONSERVATIVES

The case of Father Groppi illustrates an interesting fact: the dissenter is often a genuine conservative. Today we know that Martin Luther was a conservative, trying to return the Church to its essential teachings, as against men like Tetzel who upheld deviant devotions and practices. So too with Father Groppi. As against the white Catholic racists in Milwaukee, Father Groppi represents traditional Catholic social teaching.

A more extreme case of dissent is that presented by Father Camilo Torres. After completing his theological studies, Father Torres was sent to Louvain to receive special training in sociology. Returning to his native Colombia, as teacher and chaplain at the National University, he began to examine his personal obligations as a Chris-

tian in view of the concrete, daily needs of the people in Colombia. He became convinced that God was asking him for a conscious and intelligent effort "to change the basic economic and social structures which produced the dire conditions in which the people lived." To Father Torres' concern, the Cardinal Primate responded: "Revolution is only justified when there is absolute tyranny." (José M. Bonino, a Methodist observer at the Second Vatican Council from Latin America, has an excellent account of Father Torres' career in "Christians and the Political Revolution" in *Motive*, December, 1966.)

AUTHORITY AND THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

Father Torres did not feel that the Cardinal's response was an adequate answer to his problem. He came to the conclusion that "Revolutionary action is a Christian, a priestly struggle." He saw no possibility of reform in the government, no chance of substantial technical or economic revolution, no genuinely "free" elections. He had pledged himself to the poor, and he saw revolution as the only possible way to relieve their misery. "The people know that legal means are at an end . . . only revolution is left." The Castroist movement seemed the most efficient way to improve the situation. Father Torres joined and was killed in 1966.

Bonino asks: "How can a devoted, intelligent Christian be led to such a position?" He then analyzes the situation in the underdeveloped countries, concluding not only that legal continuity of government is not an absolute guarantee of social order but also that armed violence may at times be justified. For the harm done by armed violence is to be measured against the static violence of injustice, slave labor, and hunger under a stable government.

Father Torres was a dissenter who was essentially a conservative. He was so anxious to redress the disturbance of God's order and to bring about the peace and justice enjoined by the Gospel that he even collaborated with atheists toward this

goal. How could a Christian collaborate with atheists? Listen to Bishop Bernardino Pinera Carvallo of Temuco, Chile, speaking at the Synod in Rome: "Marxism in Latin America was not followed because of its ideology but because of its practical approach to existing structures. Unfortunately the Church did not change anything in these existing structures and failed even to change the mentality of the people. In Chile, people did not want to follow atheism but wanted to do something against injustice."

The Administration in Washington is trying to come to grips with the problem of dissent. Any governmental regime is constantly beset by the temptation to manage the news and to release only information that is favorable to the regime. But the Johnson regime is making at least a feeble attempt to cope with war dissenters, with conscientious objectors, with citizens who withhold taxes for support of the war. It has discovered long since that censorship of the news usually backfires and does more harm than good.

THE CHARISM OF PROPHETIC DISSENT

The Church, in this age of dialogue with world, must likewise listen to voices of dissent in the world. I venture to say that the prevalent dissent over the Vietnam war will exert an immense influence on the development of Catholic theology of war and conscientious objection. But the Church, and I mean the members of the Church, must also listen to dissent *within* the Church; for reform ordinarily means listening to dissent, and the *Decree on Ecumenism* says: "Christ summons the Church as she goes her pilgrim way to that continual reformation of which she always has need insofar as she is an institution of men here on earth." God gives his Church ministry and sacraments but from time to time also confers on individuals those mysterious spiritual gifts we call *charisms*. They have been known to blow cobwebs off the structures of the Church and perhaps even to shake the Church to its foundations.

Protestant Eucharistic Reality?

HARRY J. MCSORLEY, C.S.P.

THE RELATION OF ORDERS TO THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

The *Decree on Ecumenism* urges that "the doctrine about the Lord's Supper, about the other sacraments, worship, and ministry in the Church should form subjects of dialogue" (n. 22). The ecumenical aspects of these issues have, of course, been aired for a number of years in ecumenical journals and in dialogue groups. Recently, however, one can sense in some of the Roman Catholic literature the possibility of a major breakthrough on the meaning of priestly ministry or orders and the relationship of "valid" orders to the Lord's Supper—a question long controverted by Catholics and Protestants.

The following statement of a distinguished Swiss theologian illustrates an understanding of the sacrament of holy orders that was widely held by Catholics prior to Vatican Council II:

"To what would the sacramental power given in baptism be reduced if there were no priests to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, if there were neither priests nor bishops to confer the other sacraments? It would deposit in the baptized . . . a cer-

tain connaturality to confer . . . private baptism; and it would give them a radical power to contract Christian marriage. . . . But the sacrifice and five of the sacraments of the New Law would be lost. . . . Neither the sacrifice nor the sacrament of the eucharist would be perpetuated in the world if, *per impossible*, the power of orders were extinguished . . ." (C. Journet, *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, Vol. I, London-New York, 1955, pp. 88f.).

Closely linked to this view in the pre-conciliar Church was the conviction that the Protestant ministry was invalid, either because the sacramentality of holy orders was denied or, in the case of Anglicanism, because of a defect of form and intention in the ordination rite itself. In the common Catholic consciousness this meant that, regardless of their desire to be faithful to the will of Jesus as expressed at the

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Last Supper, Protestants simply did not have the holy eucharist. The Catholic sacramental theo-logic was quite simple: no validly ordained priests—therefore no sacrament of the eucharist.

According to traditional principles of Catholic theology, the devout observance of this invalid Lord's Supper could be, for Protestants in good faith, a truly religious act called a spiritual communion. Ecumenically-minded Catholics would underscore the fact that a Protestant participating in his invalid Lord's Supper with deep fervor and love could receive more grace and achieve a deeper union with Christ than a Catholic who receives the valid sacrament routinely and without devotion. Schillebeeckx, following St. Thomas, sees the Protestant Lord's Supper as more than a spiritual communion, but still does not call it a sacrament:

"It is the spiritual reception of the sacrament itself. . . . The rite of the Communion Service (though it is not even partly a valid sacrament) is therefore a quasi-sacramental manifestation of an explicit eucharistic desire" (*Christ, the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, London and New York, 1963, pp. 241-243).

MEANING OF PRIESTLY MINISTRY

In recent years a number of studies by Catholic theologians have considerably developed the Catholic understanding of the meaning of the priestly ministry, with the result that the ministry of Protestant Churches is also being seen in a new light.

(1) The diversity and flexibility in the order of the early Church has been found to be far greater than was previously recognized. For example, bishops were not always consecrated through laying on of hands by other bishops. (Cf. J. Colson, *L'évêque dans les communautés primitives*, Paris, 1951 and the Protestant historian, W. Telfer, "Episcopal Succession in Egypt," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 3 [1952], pp. 1-13.)

(2) Not only baptism and confirmation, but also the sacrament of holy orders has had extraordinary ministers (cf. Journ-

et, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-119; P. Fransen, "Ordo," in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 7, pp. 1212-1220). Trent's teaching on the powers of bishops (Denz. 967) should be interpreted in the light of these facts as well as by the general hermeneutic principles suggested by Fransen in various articles.

SERVANT OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

(3) The ordained priest is being seen today not in terms of *ontic* or "physical" (Journet, *op. cit.*, p. 115) powers to consecrate bread and wine and to forgive sins which are in no way possessed by other baptized Christians. The *Constitution on the Church* does speak of the "sacred power" of the priestly ministry (nn. 10 and 18), but there is no formal definition of what this *potestas* is. There is no need to conceive of it as an ontic change of the person ordained. It is sufficient to see it as an *authorization* to hold an office and to perform specific ecclesial functions. (Cf. Rahner, *LThK-Konzilskommentar*, I, pp. 211f.) The ministerial priest is thus seen as one who serves the People of God "by rendering present and effective the message of Jesus Christ, his sacramental worship of the Father and his shepherding action creating holy community" (G. Baum, "The Ministerial Priesthood," *The Ecumenist* 4 [1965], p. 5). Official or ministerial priesthood and charisms are not in opposition, since the ministry itself is a charism, a gift, which brings with it grace to exercise the office through the sacramental laying on of hands. (Cf. Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, New York, 1963, pp. 105f.) There is a "character" which distinguishes the ministerial priest from the lay priest. But this is, as Trent teaches, a *spiritual sign* (Denz. 852), and is to be construed neither as a material mark on the soul of the ordained priest nor as a mystical sign which can't be perceived, which would be no sign at all. (Cf. Schillebeeckx, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-216; Rahner, *The Church and the Sacraments*, pp. 88ff.) When the priestly character of holy orders is expressed as a sacral-social (ecclesial) function that con-

fers no greater personal dignity on its bearer in the eyes of God, then "metaphysical clericalism" will be avoided. (Cf. Fransen, "Ordo," *LThK* 7, p. 1219; "Priestertum," *Handbuch theol. Grundbegriffe*, Vol. II, Munich, 1963, p. 348.)

(4) Our clear present-day distinctions between validity and liceity were not operative in the early Church. (Cf. K. Mörsdorf, "Die Entwicklung der Zweigliedrigkeit der kirchlichen Hierarchie," *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift*, 3 [1952], pp. 1ff.) Even at Trent the distinction was not applied consistently. Canon 7 on holy orders (Denz. 967) teaches that those who have not been properly (*rite*) ordained are not the lawful (*legitimos*) ministers of the Word and of the sacraments.

(5) Validity of a sacrament can be understood as a "juridical claim to ecclesiastical recognition . . . the finishing touch" of every normal sacramental celebration. (F. J. van Beeck, "Towards an Ecumenical Understanding of the Sacraments," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 3 [1966], p. 63. Cf. W. H. van de Pol, *Anglicanism in Ecumenical Perspective*, Pittsburgh, 1965, pp. 270f. D. O'Hanlon, S.J. has endorsed van Beeck's highly important article in a paper, "The Ministry and Order of the Church," which was presented at the May, 1967 meeting of the national Roman Catholic-Presbyterian theological consultation held at Collegeville, Minnesota.)

THE EUCHARIST IN EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

In 1962, Hans Küng, reflecting on the implications of the priesthood of all believers, raised the question of the possibility of the eucharist being celebrated without an ordained priest by Christians who find themselves in an emergency situation such as that of a concentration camp or in the contemporary ecumenical situation in which millions of sincere Christians exercise their baptismal priesthood served by a ministry whose validity is not recognized by Rome. Küng emphasizes that it is not a question of what the Christian can do under normal circumstances, i.e., in which the ecclesial

office can perform its ordinary service (*Structures of the Church*, New York, 1962, pp. 205-212).

F. J. van Beeck, in the lengthy but very rich article mentioned above, in effect answers Küng's question affirmatively. Van Beeck calls attention to the fact—acknowledged by Vatican Council II—that Protestant Churches are Churches in some real sense. And "where there is Church, there is sacrament" (p. 73). These Churches also celebrate certain sacraments in good faith with the intention of doing what the Church does. The coupling of an ecclesial setting with the proper intention constitutes two of the three "basic conditions for a real and true sacramental celebration" (p. 78). Turning to the third condition—the competent minister—van Beeck amply documents his pivotal thesis "that the validity of a sacrament has never been univocally linked up with the validly ordained minister" (p. 79).

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTRY BASED ON BAPTISM

After giving many instances of extraordinary ministers of sacraments, he then proposes the hypothesis: "When a group of Christians get somehow isolated from the normal church order without the prospect of a speedy normalization of the legal status . . . the isolated *ecclesiola*, in virtue of Christ's presence, could celebrate its sacraments, administered by those who in this particular congregation take the burden of ministry upon themselves in view of their spontaneous ability to serve as leaders. In such cases, we would like to suggest, the community could claim a truly sacramental character for these celebrations. . . ." (pp. 88f.). Thus "the ministry of [the Word and] the sacraments as exercised by Protestant ministers may in terms of the Roman Catholic church order be qualified as recognizable, as an extraordinary ministry" (p. 90). This "extraordinary ministry would be based on baptism, of which the sacramental ministry is the ultimate ministerial concretization and shape" (p. 90).

Van Beeck's essay, based on a series of lectures he gave at Oxford in May, 1964,

did not take into account the approach to the question of the sacramental life of Protestant Churches that is found in Chapter 3, n. 22 of the *Decree on Ecumenism* promulgated November 21, 1964. In our opinion, this passage of the Decree confirms van Beeck's main contention by its implication that the "Holy Supper" celebrated by the separated Churches and ecclesial Communities in the West is, in some imperfect though substantial sense, the eucharistic mystery itself and not simply a *votum sacramenti* or a quasi-sacramental manifestation of a desire for the eucharist.

DECREE ON ECUMENISM

The corresponding number of the first version of the schema on ecumenism (April 22, 1963) was simply entitled "On the Sacrament of Baptism." At the request of several fathers and also of some observers, a paragraph concerning the eucharist was inserted into the second version of the schema (April 27, 1964) and the title of n. 22 then read "The Sacramental Life." (Cf. L. Cardinal Jaeger, *A Stand on Ecumenism: The Council's Decree*, New York, 1965, p. 43.)

According to the *Relatio* appended to the second version of the schema, the new insertion first mentions the "essential deficiency" in the celebration of the eucharist in the Western Churches and then indicates the intention of these Churches to signify full communion with Christ and to proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

The promulgated text reads: "Although the ecclesial Communities separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us which flows from baptism, and although we believe they have not preserved the proper reality of the eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of orders, nevertheless when they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and await his coming in glory" (tr.: Vatican Polyglot Press).

The second version originally read:

"... although they have not preserved the full reality (*plenam realitatem*) of the eucharist, especially, etc. . . ." The change to "original and integral substance" (*genuinam atque integram substantiam*) was one of 19 changes that were introduced into the text at the suggestion of Pope Paul the day before the final voting on the Decree. The purpose of this and the other changes was to insure "greater clarity of the text." According to Cardinal Jaeger, this change in n. 22 "did not constitute any change of content" (*op. cit.*, p. 55).

SECRETARIAT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

For a correct interpretation of n. 22, it is necessary to consult the replies of the Secretariat for Christian Unity to some of the objections that were expressed by certain fathers in their written *modi* or reservations after they had voted on Chapter III on October 8, 1964. Our source here is the third volume of *modi* that were examined and evaluated by the Secretariat and presented to the Council fathers for approval.

1. By the phrase "especially because of the absence of the sacrament of orders," the Secretariat did not wish to imply that all of the separated Churches of the West lack this sacrament. The Secretariat's response indicates that the word "especially" (*praesertim*) allows for exceptions, as in the case of the Old Catholic Church. Accordingly one cannot interpret n. 22 as a new pronouncement against the validity of Anglican orders. The fresh case made by van Beeck (*op. cit.*, pp. 91-105) for the sacramentality of Anglican orders is thus unaffected by the *Decree on Ecumenism*.

2. One hundred and fifty-two fathers asked that the word "full" be omitted. They thus wanted the Council to say that, mainly because of the absence of holy orders, Protestants *have not* preserved the reality of the eucharist. Various reasons were given: (i) In the absence of orders there is neither the full nor a partial reality of the eucharist, but only a non-efficacious sign (13 fathers). (ii) Protestants have kept none of the reality of the eucharist be-

cause they do not admit the real presence of Christ and a real sacrifice. The schema itself speaks of the merely significative value of the "Holy Supper" (115 fathers). (iii) The eucharist is either real or isn't. We do not know of any semi-real eucharist. The expression is a source of confusion (1 father). To this the Secretariat replied:

CONTEMPORARY PROTESTANT BELIEF

"Generally speaking it may be said that the majority of Protestants believe in some presence of Christ in the eucharist. This is clear both from the teaching of the Reformers and from recent Protestant theology, as well as from the spiritual and liturgical life of Protestants. But they use other forms of expression than Catholic theologians. We must still greatly extend our mutual knowledge with the separated brethren of doctrine and spiritual life as has already been said in article 9. But since many fathers find the present text difficult, it is proposed to say 'the full reality of the eucharistic mystery.' Thus all danger is removed of an ambiguity concerning the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of the eucharist. The whole sentence then runs: 'Though we believe that they have not preserved the full reality of the eucharistic mystery, especially because of the defect of the sacrament of orders. . . .'"

One rightly sees in this reply a mild rebuke by the Secretariat of the 115 fathers who showed so little awareness of contemporary Protestant belief concerning the Lord's Supper.

3. Six fathers wished to substitute the words "true" or "sacramental" for "full" on the grounds that without the power of orders the eucharist is not sacramental and has no true reality. The Secretariat rejected these proposals, admitting that truth is not fully preserved when fullness is lacking. "It cannot be said, however," continues the Secretariat, "that nothing of the truth is preserved."

4. An objection was also made by one father that the word "ineffable" replace "full" because to the extent that the eucharist is a memorial of the death and

resurrection of Christ it does not enter into the very reality of the mystery but accompanies it. The Secretariat referred to an earlier response it had given: "It cannot be denied that the separated brethren, in the worship of the Holy Supper, truly commemorate the death and resurrection of the Lord." The Secretariat then adds: "The memorial (*Anamnesis*) of the death and resurrection of the Lord is, according to the Council of Trent, the very representation of the eucharistic mystery."

A renewed Catholic eucharistic theology thus appreciates far more deeply the commemorative aspect of the Lord's Supper than did the apologetic theology of the past which was preoccupied with refuting the notion that the eucharist is a "mere memorial."

ADVANCE IN ECUMENICAL UNDERSTANDING

In the light of the Secretariat's evaluation of the *modi* to n. 22 it is clear that the intention of the Decree is to affirm that Protestant Churches have in their celebration of the Lord's Supper *something* of the reality of the eucharistic mystery, even when the sacrament of orders is lacking.

This "something" of the reality of the eucharistic mystery in Protestant Churches is not to be construed merely as a spiritual communion or as the *votum eucharistiae*. There is not the slightest hint in the evaluation of the *modi* that this was the intention of the Decree. The idea of a *votum sacramenti* was a familiar, pre-conciliar notion and if this is all that was intended, the Secretariat could have easily responded in a few lines to all the objections that were made. That the Secretariat was not thinking simply of spiritual reception of the sacrament by Protestants is also clear from the context and from its use of the term "eucharistic mystery," which involves not only the reality of communion with Christ sacramentally present, but also the sacramental commemoration of the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ.

The idea that, solely or mainly because of the lack of the sacrament or power of orders, Protestant Churches do not have

anything of the reality or of the true, sacramental reality of the eucharistic mystery was explicitly rejected by the Secretariat.

Two corollaries concerning the meaning of the sacrament of holy orders seem to us to flow from this fact: (1) The validly conferred sacrament of holy orders is not absolutely necessary for rendering present and effective something of the reality of the eucharistic mystery; (2) the sacrament of orders is one of the conditions necessary for making present the genuine and integral substance of the eucharistic mystery, to use the language of the final version which, as we noted above, does not represent an essential change in meaning. "Genuina" has little to do with our modern idea of genuineness; it is perhaps best rendered as "original," as Werner Becker, a theological consultant for the Secretariat, has suggested in his German translation: "ursprünglich." "Integra" (complete; total; in its fullness) is closely related to "plena." One can say of it precisely what the Secretariat said of "plena": When totality or completeness is lacking, then truth is not fully preserved. However, one can't say that nothing of the truth is preserved.

ORDERS AND MINISTRY

If these corollaries about holy orders are correct, it is easy to see how well they harmonize with the recent thinking on the meaning of orders and ministry that was sketched above. We can find even in n. 22 of the *Decree on Ecumenism* an implication that as far as the eucharistic ministry is concerned, orders is seen not in terms of the conferral of a power to consecrate which is shared in no way at all by other baptized brethren. Holy orders is seen rather in terms of the gifts of grace

and of ecclesial authority to serve God's people by leading them in the eucharistic mystery—the sign and cause of unity—in order and unity. Order and unity are mutually dependent aspects of the Church. When an ordained priest leads the eucharistic worship one of the essential conditions is present for that eucharistic reality to be "genuine and integral" as a sign of the unity of God's people. When the eucharist is led by one who has not received the sacrament of orders something integral to the eucharistic mystery is lacking: namely, the full expression of church unity by a minister standing in an ordered relationship to the bishop, whose episcopacy, as the expression of apostolicity, is "the canon and touchstone of all . . . church order" (van Beeck, p. 96).

BREAKING NEW GROUND

Archbishop Martin of Rouen, in introducing the first version of the schema on ecumenism in 1963, stated: "Ecumenism is something completely new. . . . It comprises many problems which have not yet received a complete answer." One would betray theological and historical insensitivity, therefore, were one to suppose that all problems concerning the lack of orders and the reality of the eucharist in Protestant Churches had been answered prior to the Council. Oscar Cullmann, the perceptive and faithful Protestant guest at Vatican Council II, said that the *Decree on Ecumenism* was "more than the opening of a door: new ground was broken. No Catholic document has ever spoken of non-Catholic Christians in this way."

Surely none had ever spoken of the reality of the Protestant eucharist in this way.

Books Received

Christ Among Us

Anthony J. Wilhelm, C.S.P.

Newman Press. \$4.95

Father Wilhelm brings impressive credentials to the writing of this book. He has been engaged in adult catechetics for his entire priestly life. Much of that time has been occupied in aiding non-Catholic inquirers interested in Catholicism. As an outgrowth of this interest, he has conducted courses and workshops for priests, laity and seminarians in the details of evangelization and of the catechumenate. So it is most helpful to have this "modern presentation of the Catholic Faith."

An early participant in Ecumenism, he is now Catholic Consultant to the Northern California Council of Churches and is a Catholic representative on the San Francisco Christian Unity Committee. In addition, he teaches catechetics for adults at St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, California and is associated with the program for adult education for the San Francisco Archdiocese.

This book reflects these concerns both in the arrangement of material and in the questions where his answers receive greatest stress. In each of the 26 chapters, from "Our Life in God" to "Fulfillment Forever" it is clear that the writer has faced squarely the real problems of adult Americans. They also reveal that the writer has kept abreast of the renewed theology and the best ideals of the new catechetics. Where he is unable to give an extended treatment of a topic, he suggests the latest pertinent books. In fact, his bibliographies amount to an excellent library of Catholic doctrine for our time.

The publisher's format will be of benefit to different types of readers. There are topical subheadings in each chapter, with each paragraph beginning with boldface type. It is thus possible to concentrate on a brief treatment of the really essential material. A more extensive discussion follows the boldface lines. For a completely de-

tailed understanding, one can follow the indented paragraphs. Discussion questions and personal reflections add greatly to the value of this most useful book.

Jesus is Lord:

Paul's Life in Christ

Joseph Blenkinsopp

Paulist Press Deus Books. \$1.00

The author takes the view that Christianity is enfeebled when we study it merely as a static system of dogma, morality and worship. He begins by looking at the life of St. Paul to disclose the dynamic nature of the Christian life. Rather than one or another theoretical idea, he thus sees it as "an experience, the experience of the Lord crucified but now risen, alive, present to us in community."

This message Paul inherited, yet it also came to him independently at his conversion. St. Paul was unshakably convinced that it was the sharing of the death and resurrection of Christ in a new humanity that made sense to human life. And he burned out his energies—ultimately suffering martyrdom—to form and develop "communities of dedicated men and women committed to living the new life, the first of a new humanity."

The author is an able scripture scholar abreast of the latest advances in his field. To this scholarship he joins a gift for selecting the essential points and a talent for clear exposition. In six chapters on the Christian life as understood and lived by St. Paul, he succeeds admirably in sorting out "what is essential from what is marginal and secondary." A most stimulating contribution to Christian renewal.

A Guide to Short Films

For Religious Education Programs

Patrick J. McCaffrey

Fides Publisher. \$1.00

Experimentation, especially in the field of religious education, is a prime necessity

today. Father McCaffrey gives us here the gist of a dissertation on the use of films in catechetics, and it is excellent. He lists 72 films that run approximately half an hour. Not all of them are expressly religious, but all of them suggest the real-life questions on which the good news throws light. The author offers a great service in suggesting what films to employ, how to use them and where they may be obtained.

He has chosen only those films which are really well done and that are likely to be serviceable for an indefinite period. For each he offers a rating, a resume, topics suggested by the film, and the groups for whom it would be most useful. (Most of them may best be used with high-school classes or with adults.) There is a helpful topical index and a bibliography. About half the films have discussion questions which will help the teacher devise questions and topics of his own. The author and his committee provide a needed and useful book in a promising field of religious education.

Secular Priest in
The New Church
Gerard S. Sloyan
Herder and Herder. \$5.95

Father Sloyan, once again, selects a vital topic which is happily being re-studied and persuades a dozen experts to discuss with him phases of that topic in scholarly, forthright fashion. This time his theme is the Secular Priesthood—a subject which cries to heaven for reflection and discussion in view of its inseparable relation to authentic Christian renewal. The book comes at a time when only an ostrich can escape the poignancy and anxiety of priests striving for authenticity in this post-Vatican era of a changing world.

Aspects of the general theme treated include: the Theology, Spirituality, Vatican II, Canon Law and the Liturgy as these relate to the role of the secular and regular clergy. And topics like the Pastor, Assistant, Social Mission, Intellectual Life, Humanity, Priest and Bishop and Ministry in the Future round out the book. The selection of writers for these chapters could scarcely be improved. They include learned, exper-

enced and even provocative names—all of whom richly deserve a hearing.

Considering the variety of views on this theme proposed by responsible theologians today, it is not surprising that the present writers draw diverse conclusions and propose divergent solutions. But as Father Sloyan points out, even the bishops in the Council did not speak about these matters with absolute clarity nor without conflict, yet they maintained a larger consistency.

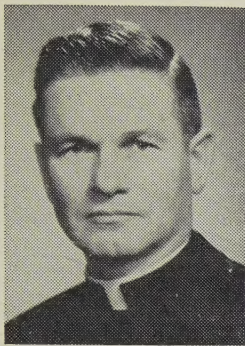
The editor points out the urgent need of such a book because "the ranks of ordained priests and of Christian ministers in all Churches threaten to dwindle below the point where these communions can function in good health. Unless the priesthood can be restored to popular consciousness as a role attractive to young men in numbers, the Church will pay a high price for years to come." This book represents a major contribution to the understanding of a most critical problem.

J.T.M.

GUIDE

- A Publication of the Paulist Institute for Religious Research.
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Guide Lights

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY, 1968. . .

Close observers of the ecumenical movement have noted that while there has been a great upsurge of ecumenical activity over the past few years, this has been more an increase of the same kind of things rather than any new breakthroughs. This observation is particularly applicable to the annual week of prayer for Christian Unity. While the incidence of this week has spread fairly quickly across the United States, at the same time public interest and participation in it has probably declined. The reason lies somewhere between the static format so often employed in this exercise and the fact that it has become fairly commonplace. While both of these criticisms are undoubtedly true they should hardly militate against striving to make of this week something truly significant for Christian Unity. While it is true that if ecumenism is to really take hold in the Christian churches, a large scale grass roots participation is essential, this does not mean that such broad participation is necessary in the beginning. It would be good if significant numbers of Christians did turn out for this week of prayer. The fact that they do not should be seen more as a challenge than an argument against it.

A quick overview of the history of the Church underlines the necessity of prayer in any of its major undertakings. Christian Unity is certainly one of these, and one of the things we might profitably pray for is that more Christians will become interested in this vital work.

CONSIDERATIONS IN PLANNING. . .

One of the ways in which this problem can be met is to widen the planning for this week. For example, it might help a bit

if a good deal of this planning was left to imaginative and freewheeling laity of the participating churches. Sometimes we clergy overlook a good many possibilities simply because we are accustomed to conducting worship in a very definite and set way. If a group of capable lay people were assigned the task of working out a prayer order that meant something to them it might turn out quite a bit different than the standard materials that are supplied each year by the principal sponsors of this week.

VARIETIES OF CONTENT. . .

However, whoever does the actual planning should feel free to experiment rather freely and to mix up different elements on different days so that the finished product does not appear too uniform. A couple of examples may help. The readings supplied are invariably from Scripture, but there is no reason why these cannot be supplemented, or in some cases, substituted for by a contemporary reading on a subject that may speak much more immediately to the congregation. In such cases it would be well to couple this with a relevant scriptural reading that would help illuminate the contemporary issue. The issue does not have to be something as basic and as emotion-laden as Viet Nam, for example. It could well consist of much less threatening subjects such as local political or social problems, basic social concerns posed by things like automation, leisure, the affluent society, etc. A little imagination and judicious choice here could well provide a focal point for a unified prayer that was at the same time both Christian and heartfelt.

Other possibilities within the format are a wider use of free prayer or other form of congregational contribution, and some specific mention and thanksgiving for local unities that have already been achieved. Included here could be one instance during the past year in which the

churches in a local community were able to face and/or accomplish something together. Thanking God for this together is not only excellent prayer but it brings it right home to the doorstep of those who are praying.

ALWAYS FLEXIBILITY. . .

In all of this planning the element of flexibility should be central. One of the weaknesses of prayer week is the fact that it appears repetitious to many. Even though the themes and materials change each year, yet they look pretty much the same. Also, there is a tendency at times to feel compelled to provide something for every day of the week. Often this is impractical and it might be wiser in many instances to limit the observance to one or two days, each with a different kind of celebration. Here is where lay participation in the planning could be most helpful as the laity probably are in the best position to express the kind of thing they would find appealing.

A POINT OF DEPARTURE. . .

Another very important fact about this week of prayer is that it can so often provide the launching pad for on-going things of an ecumenical nature—things that will turn out to be a greater contribution than the week itself in some cases. In other words, the planning for unity week should not be limited to that week but should look beyond it and very seriously take into account what kind of things can grow out of that week. An obvious one is the Living Room Dialogue. If groups of Christians meet briefly to pray together for Christian Unity this is a fine opportunity to invite them to take the next step, namely, to participate in on-going dialogue among themselves with a view toward deepening their understanding of what the Church is, and their relationship to each other within it. Naturally, before such an invitation can be issued preparation is needed. The second volume of Living Room Dialogues is now available, and this, along with the first, provides ample material to keep groups busy for the next year. What is needed to begin such a program is a few lay people who have some experience in this type of thing, even though it may not have been ecumenical. After all, people aren't so much different. If a handful of

people are accustomed to religious conversation they can readily apply their experience to this new area with far-ranging results.

In areas where there is already a high degree of cooperation and joint action between churches, naturally this week will be tied in to specific projects of a social or civic nature that are already underway. In communities where this is not the case this can become a point of departure for this kind of joint venture.

DECLINE OF DEVOTIONS. . .

Whatever else may be said about this week of prayer for Christian Unity we ought to remember that it still belongs to the category of popular devotion. Part of the reason for the decline of interest in some places is undoubtedly traceable to the general decline in devotional participation. People simply do not come to devotions any more even when they are of an ecumenical nature. Hence the importance of tying this prayer for unity to something that is more than devotional,—something practical or actionable.

Furthermore we are up against very much the same thing here that we face in catechesis generally, namely, the fact that the straight Scriptural approach has been tried and is found wanting. In teaching religion we have begun to move from the Salvation History concentration to a broader view—one that includes the history of the individual and his times. This hasn't been worked out yet to any satisfactory degree, but most feel that this is the right track. The week of prayer program is heavily scriptural but for the same reasons that this onesided emphasis proved inadequate in catechesis it is not the answer in devotion either. Some effort to incorporate the personal and contemporary experience of the congregation coupled with a challenge to widen that experience might go a long ways towards more effective devotional prayer as well as more effective catechesis. At any rate, it is worth serious experimentation and in many ways the week of prayer for Christian Unity presents itself as a very good place to experiment. All the Christian confessions have the knowledge, experience and good will for a significant contribution.

JOSEPH V. GALLAGHER, C.S.P.